

Applic. No.: 09/939,330

Amdt. Dated August 19, 2004

Reply to Office action of May 19, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-9 remain in the application. Claim 1 has been amended. Claims 10-11 have been cancelled.

In the section entitled "Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103" on pages 2-4 of the above-mentioned Office action, claims 1-3 and 5-9 have been rejected as being unpatentable over Vaartstra (US Pat. No. 6,159,855) in view of Wang et al. (US Pat. No. 5,871,811) in further view of Tanaka et al. (US Pat. No. 6,039,834) under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a); claim 4 has been rejected as being unpatentable over Vaartstra in view of Wang et al. in further view of Tanaka et al. and further in view of Arvidson (US Pat. No. 5,118,485) under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

As will be explained below, it is believed that the claims were patentable over the cited art in their original form and the claims have, therefore, not been amended to overcome the references.

Before discussing the prior art in detail, it is believed that a brief review of the invention as claimed, would be helpful.

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Claim 1 calls for, inter alia:

providing a connecting line connecting the further gas outlet opening to one of the inlet openings located upstream of the distributor plate; and

configuring, in the connecting line, a valve for controlling gas flow, the valve having an inlet and an outlet, the further gas outlet opening being directly connected to the inlet of the valve and the outlet of the valve being directly connected to the one of the inlet openings located upstream of the distributor plate.

The Examiner has stated in the section entitled "Response to Arguments" on page 4 of the Office action that Tanaka et al. teach in column 15, lines 25-51 that a connection line connects the outlet and inlet of processing chamber 400 of Fig. 3(b). The Examiner has further stated that since there is only one processing chamber in Fig. 3(b), this is a teaching of connecting the inlet and outlet openings of one and the same reactor.

However, Fig. 3(b) of Tanaka et al. clearly shows a plasma module 300 having an outlet, which is connected to an inlet 415 of a reactor chamber 400 by a connecting line (see specifically column 15, lines 46-47). Plasma is generated in the plasma module 300 and is to be cleaned with the reactor chamber 400. It is true that there is only one reactor chamber 400. However, the plasma module 300 and the reactor chamber 400 are separate and not one and the same reactor.

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It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claim 1. Claim 1 is, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art and since all of the dependent claims are ultimately dependent on claim 1, they are believed to be patentable as well.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-9 are solicited.

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel would appreciate a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out. In the alternative, the entry of the amendment is requested as it is believed to place the application in better condition for appeal, without requiring extension of the field of search.

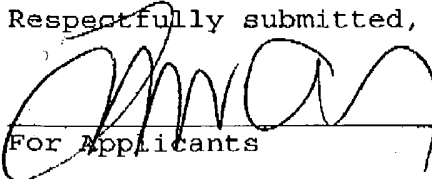
If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made. Please charge any fees which might be due with respect to 37 CFR Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to

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the Deposit Account of Lerner and Greenberg, P.A., No. 12-  
1099.

Respectfully submitted,

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For Applicants

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